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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 18, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 18, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): The daily, while it reported recent resuming of the light rail metro project in Adana which was halted five years ago due to reported shortage of funds, despite the 339 million USD that was spent for it to that date, pointed out the irony created as workers were currently striving to purge the water that accumulated in one of the big wells dug during the past construction process. The article mainly points out the irony in workers' efforts to save tons of fish that started a colony in that "huge million-dollar-aquarium" during the water discharge process. The daily reminds with a photo showed Mayor Aytac Durak, just before March 2004 elections, posing for cameras, as he ran a test drive in one of the trains of the supposed rail system.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / EVRENSEL / RADIKAL: Nearly 1000 DTP members, whom the daily refers to as elected members, started "A Walk for Peace" in Diyarbakir the previous day. Thousands of people reportedly enthusiastically welcomed the convoy as it entered several provinces such as Sanliurfa, Gaziantep and Adana, to draw the attention of the state authorities and public to Kurdish people's calls for peace, and to extend support for the cease-fire. The walk will reportedly end in Ankara today, and it is expected that some of the DTP members would talk with the parliament spokesperson in Ankara.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / EVRENSEL: Many people protested with marches in Istanbul, Izmir and Adana the seventh anniversary of simultaneously held December 2000 police operations, dubbed "Return to Life", which ironically caused the deaths of 122 inmates as the police conducted operations at twenty separate jails in Turkey.

EKSPRES: Unrest broke out in Inonu Park of Adana as some political parties and civil society members held a march to protest the seventh anniversary of "Return to Life" operations. A group of people, undergoing police search reportedly as they were trying to enter the venue designated for the protest, had a brief heated altercation with the police.

CUMHURIYET: Reportedly, because of an ensuing shrinkage in the PKK grassroots as radical religious groups are reportedly gaining more influence in southeastern Turkey, recent criticisms

from top PKK officials in the Qandil Mountains against some religious sects and groups followed similar remarks expressed by Abdullah Ocalan last week.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Sirnak Governor's Office notified the Ministry of Interior and Foreign Ministry about seals used by the Iraqi side during the processing of trucks passing the Habur Border Gate in Sirnak, to enter Turkey. The seals imprinted on the documents of the commercial vehicles the word "Kurdistan" as in the following statement "Iraqi Federal Republic - Kurdistan Regional Authority".

CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT

ZAMAN: The daily reports that nine children were detained on grounds that children stole telephone cables of a police station in a village of Diyarbakir. According to the authorities, one of the children died under detention because of a heart attack.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / EVRENSEL: The dailies reported allegations that soldiers opened fire on a 15-member group of children in a village of Diyarbakir, as the children, who were reportedly scared of the soldiers accusing them of stealing some telephone cables of the police station, ran away. Soldiers allegedly caught Semsettin Yavuzkaplan, a 16-year-old boy. Soldiers reportedly forced him to lie down, treated brutally and allegedly dragged the child on the ground towards the police station. Later, police reportedly detained seven more children, and announced that the boy initially brought to the station died because of a heart attack. Villagers stoned the police station when officials did not return the dead body of the child to his relatives. When the villagers blockaded a section of a main road, many jandarma teams deployed in the area took the situation under control. Human Rights Association and DTP sent

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delegations to the village.

CUMHURİYET: Police seized 10 kilograms of heroin in Hakkari during a search of a car that was being followed under police's investigative efforts.

HUMAN RIGHTS

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Adana Chapter of Human Rights Association held a dinner event to mark Human Rights Week. Representatives of the political parties and democratic organizations attended the event. Chairperson of the Adana Chapter said that the (Turkish) state was committing a crime by ignoring the hunger strikes and the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

ZAMAN / HURRIYET: Health Minister Recep Akdag paid a visit to Hatay and conducted local studies at several state hospitals where allegations of irregularities in the tenders had recently surfaced.

GREEN